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*An Invitation to South-east
Nebraska*

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AN INVITATION
TO
SOUTH-EAST
NEBRASKA.

BY
HON. ROBT. W. FURNAS,
Secretary State Board of Agriculture,

WITH A
SECTIONAL MAP OF NEBRASKA,

CORRECTED TO DATE.

FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION UPON APPLICATION TO P. S. EUSTIS,
OMAHA, NEBRASKA.

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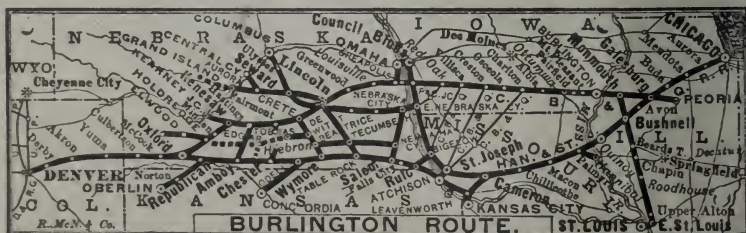
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SOUTH-EASTERN NEBRASKA.

For the past decade particularly the great rush of immigration in southern Nebraska has been to points near and beyond the hundredth meridian west, the great object being to obtain homesteads, cheap lands, and in large tracts. The objects and accomplishments sought, it is believed, have, to a great extent at least, had their day. While entertaining and freely expressing utmost faith in all portions of Nebraska, the object of this publication is to show, briefly and pointedly as may be, that much valuable and desirable territory has been passed over without thought or examination. Without, as indicated, disparaging in the least other sections of the state, the aim in this is to call attention to attractions and inducements found south of the Platte river, and east, say of the east line of Phelps county, and extending to the Missouri river. True, in this region the larger tracts of land are no longer obtainable; but what is thought and believed to be preferable for the average farmer, smaller and more select bodies of land, surrounded by older and more advanced improvements, which only time can secure. Wild or unimproved lands in many of these older counties really can be bought for less money than in the extreme west, where the rush and consequent demand has so largely prevailed. Schools, churches, and other important factors, characteristic of more advanced civilization, as a matter of course, are found in the older counties. Taxes and other expenses of living, because of these, are proportionately less. The eastern and middle portions of the territory embraced in the scope of this publication are particularly noted for successful fruit culture, a requisite of most people seeking new homes. In the counties bordering on the Missouri river the more tender fruits, peaches, apricots, prunes, and such, are grown. The soil generally is of greater depth, more productive, and better adapted to diversified agricultural pursuits. The smaller practical farmer, especially with some ready means, will find many advantages in the region indicated not found elsewhere in the West. Beside the many acres desirable unimproved lands, there are always to be found improved and partially improved farms for sale at bargains.

In these older sections thousands of acres of tame grasses are successfully grown. Artificial forests abound, which have greatly modified and changed for the better climatic conditions. The average rainfall is about 39 inches, and of late years more evenly distributed, coming at all seasons of the year, as it were. Especially have fall rains prevailed of late years, thus throwing soil into winter quarters in good condition.

In thinking of and referring to the new West, the general idea has prevailed among non-residents that water courses, and water-power especially, were not only scarce but non-existent almost. The fact is that Nebraska as a whole has abundant water supply and power. A half century such growth as we have enjoyed the past decade will not exhaust the water-power. Nearly all the streams, however small, have more or less unoccupied power. The best of clay for making excellent brick is found in almost all parts of this southeastern section. In many places, and now being extensively used, is found the best of potter's and kaoline clays.

Since the first decade of Nebraska's existence the development has been unprecedented. This advance is largely attributable to railroad

enterprise. This, too, has been without precedent in new countries. It will be seen by reference to the map that not a county named in this paper is without railroad connection, some with as high as ten and eleven different connections.

Nearly all the lands embraced in this district are peculiar in that they are not affected by extremes of wet and drouth. They are situated between the Platte and Republican rivers, the latter being much lower than the former. Scientists who have given thought and attention insist that the Republican river is largely made up from the seepage or percolation from the Platte. Be this as it may, the subterraneous supply of water between these streams is abundant and near the surface.

That portion of the district here referred to, west of the sixth principal meridian and outside the valleys, while good corn is grown, is characterized more particularly for its superior small grain products, especially wheat. The spring wheat from these regions has always graded above any other in the Chicago market.

Description of leading characteristics of the counties herein referred to—lay of land, soil, products, advantages of markets, society, development and the like, are necessarily exceedingly brief. They are meant only as outlines, inviting personal observation and investigation, when and where all desirable details can be obtained.

In giving population, the census of 1885 is taken. To this, in all counties, may safely be added a very handsome per cent increase.

We mention, of crops, only the leading staple ones. All others incident to agricultural regions of the West are produced in corresponding proportion.

All this country is yet new and inviting. To the honest, industrious, enterprising people, it presents attractions, openings, and advantages.

In matter of valuation for taxable purposes, we copy from official records, and cannot refrain from expressing the belief that great wrong is done in the mode practiced. In most instances the amounts returned and used do not represent over one-fourth the actual cash value. This shows, to the uninformed, an inferior wealth and an unjust high rate per cent taxation.

South of the Platte river, Richardson, Nemaha, Otoe, and Cass are known as the river border counties; Pawnee, Johnson, Lancaster, and Saunders as the second tier west from the river; Gage, Jefferson, Saline, Seward, and Butler as the third tier; Thayer, Fillmore, York, and Polk, the fourth tier; Nuckolls, Clay, and Hamilton, the fifth tier; Webster and Adams, the sixth tier; Franklin and Kearney, the seventh tier; owing to the eastern trend of the Missouri river, opposite the south tier of counties, Jefferson, Thayer, Nuckolls, Webster, and Franklin, in the order named, are really in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth tiers. These, with Gage, Pawnee, and Richardson, are the counties bordering on Kansas, as far west as herein treated. All the counties west of Gage are twenty-four miles square, containing 368,640 acres, except Butler, Polk, Hamilton, and Kearney, which have fractions less by reason of the Platte river trespassing on their area.

MISSOURI RIVER COUNTIES.

The four old, well-developed counties, bordering on the Missouri river, south of the Platte, are, commencing south with the Nebraska and Kansas state line, Richardson, Nemaha, Otoe, and Cass. The Missouri river courses the entire eastern boundary of all four. Rich-

ardson and Nemaha are directly opposite the two northwestern counties in the state of Missouri, Holt, and Atchison. Otoe and Cass directly opposite the two southwestern counties in Iowa, Fremont and Mills. The general natural character and conditions of these four counties are nearly the same. The universal prevalence of that peculiar and valuable deposit known as Loess soil, characterizes the entire bluff lands along the river, extending west nearly the entire length of each county. This soil has been thoroughly analyzed and tested, both in our State University and at Amherst, Mass. It is found identical with the famed Rhine soil, known as the great wine growing soil of the world. This, with the climatic influence of the broad stretch of water surface of the Missouri river and adjacent heavy bodies of native timber, render these lands and conditions without a superior for fruit growing. All the leading standard and valuable fruits here grow in profusion and perfection. Apples, pears, peaches, plums, apricots, cherries, grapes, and small fruits of all kinds can be relied on. All the fruits which won the national prizes at Richmond, Virginia, Boston, Mass., and Chicago, Ill., were grown in these river counties, and in the soil described. The lands are still largely unoccupied, and can be purchased at reasonable prices. They face mainly the east, with almost innumerable sheltered canyons or valleys leading back from the river to the open prairie west. The average altitude above the sea level, in these counties, is about one thousand feet. In the main, the bluffs do not come up abruptly and direct to the river. Vast tracts of bottom lands of boundless fertility intervene between the bluffs and river.

ADAMS COUNTY

contains an area of 576 square miles, or 368,640 acres. It is one hundred and twenty miles west from the Missouri river, and twenty-four miles north of the Kansas-Nebraska state line. The surface of the county is very regular, almost a level plain, broken only by low bluffs along streams, affording good drainage. The county is well watered with running streams, forming the head waters of the Little Blue. The principal streams are Pawnee and Thirty-two Mile Creek.

The soil is deep, loose, friable, porous, and fertile, growing large crops, especially small grains; rainfall all-sufficient; elevation above the sea level, nearly eighteen hundred feet.

Hastings, the county seat, is one of the striking evidences in the West of wonderful development in a very short time. It can boast of nearly all the modern conveniences of old cities—gas, electric light, street railway, extensive manufactories, etc., etc. It is situated on the main line of the B. & M. R. R., and at the crossing of the St. Jo. & Gr. I. Road and junctions of the B. & M. branches to Red Cloud and Kearney. The population of the city is about ten thousand; that of the county, nineteen thousand two hundred and thirteen. There are one thousand seven hundred and ninety improved farms in the county, with seventy-seven manufacturing establishments. The valuation of property for taxable purposes in the county is \$3,022,821.85, and the state levy 7 39-40 mills on the dollar. There are 207,572 acres of improved lands in the county, and 108,173 acres unimproved. In the year 1886, of the leading crops 36,658 acres were in wheat; corn, 68,181; oats, 25,503; barley, 10,320 acres; 73,484 fruit trees, 1,806,155 forest trees, and 15,114 grape vines have been planted in the county.

The towns of importance other than the county seat, Hastings, are—

Juniata, Kenesaw, Hansen, Ayr, Mayflower, Silver Lake, Moresville, Hazle Dell, and Kingston.

BUTLER COUNTY.

This county borders on, and the northern portion is cut off by, the Platte river; is fifty miles west from the Missouri river, about midway in the state north and south. Its area is 377,000 acres. Nearly 500 acres were originally native forest, of great value in their day. The county is well watered. In addition to the Platte, which flows its entire northern border, the interior streams are—the two Blues, Oaks, Skull, Bone, Wilson, Deer, and Plum Creeks, considerable streams, with quite an array of small tributaries. The surface of the land is peculiar and picturesque, in some portions quite abrupt. Nearly all the land, however, is tillable and of rich productive character. In this county, especially, bordering the Platte river, is found the loess soil peculiar to the Missouri river regions, and which, as said, is famous for fruit growing. A branch each of the Union Pacific and the B. & M. system of railroads cross at David City, in the center of the county, radiating the entire extent of the county, north, south, east, and west. David City is the county seat. It has a population of 1,500 to 2,000. The other towns are—Brainard, Rising, Garrison, Bellwood, Ulysses, Cottonwood, Skull Creek, and Abie.

The population is 15,110; the taxable valuation of property, \$2,266,153.44; and the state levy, 7 39-40. Number of acres improved land, 170,486; unimproved, 176,841. There are 1,964 farms in the county, and 116 manufactories. In 1886 22,755 acres were in wheat, 74,422 in corn, 18,058 in oats, 726 in barley. There has been planted, to date, and growing, 1,277,207 forest trees, 50,333 fruit trees, and 10,151 grape vines.

CASS COUNTY

is the first county south of the Platte, on the Missouri river. The latter covers the whole east front, and the former courses nearly the entire northern border of the county. Beside these water supplies, the interior streams are Weeping Water river, of large supply and immense water power. Other minor streams, Pawnee, Cedar, Turkey, Four Miles, and Salt creeks, with branches of the Little Nemaha, give most abundant water supply; The county is often called the "county of valleys," because of the fine valley lands of the numerous streams. The general lay of lands is similar to other Missouri river counties described, rich and productive. Botanists have reported over one hundred and fifty varieties of native nutritious grasses growing in Cass county.

Along the Platte river and line of B. & M. R. R. in this county, are found the finest and inexhaustible limestone quarries in the West. The B. & M. R. R. Co. have for years developed and utilized these quarries to a large extent. The stone is of best quality, having by test endured a pressure of 14,000 pounds to the square inch. Good quarries are also found along the line of Missouri Pacific R. R. in the interior of the county. The soil is rich and friable, with a porous, sponge-like clay subsoil, holding moisture well in reserve. This, too, is one of the old and substantial fruit growing counties, having in it some of the oldest apple orchards in the state. Facilities for reaching the markets of the country are good. The Chicago, Burlington &

Quincy from the East and the B. & M. in Nebraska form a junction at "Pacific Junction," just across the Missouri river in Iowa, opposite Plattsmouth. The B. & M. R. R. bridge across the Missouri river is at Plattsmouth, and the machine shops for the Road are located and operated at that place. The main line of this Road passes along the entire north border of the county, westward to Denver via Lincoln. The Missouri Pacific R. R. passes north and south through the county nearly midway, east and west, with a branch leading off through the western portion from Weeping Water to Lincoln. The new line from same point to Nebraska City will provide the southeastern portion of the county. Plattsmouth is the county seat. She has about 8,000 inhabitants. The other towns are: Louisville, South Bend, Greenwood, Weeping Water, Avoca, Rock Bluff, Factoryville, Mt. Pleasant.

The population of the county is 23,447, and the taxable valuation of property, \$3,937,277.28, with the state levy 7 39-40. There are 276-948 acres improved lands, and 139,452 unimproved in the county; 2,251 farms and 99 manufactories. Of the improved lands, 15,645 acres were in wheat in 1886; 97,087 in corn; 12,809 in oats; and 3,698 in barley. Trees planted: forest, 1,295,132; fruit, 151,040; and grape vines, 53,740.

CLAY COUNTY

is situated on the high upland prairie, one hundred and twenty-five miles from the Missouri river. The B. & M. R. R. passes through the entire county, east to west. The St. J. & Gr. Island, across the south-west portion, and a branch of the B. & M. across the south-east corner. The county is twenty-four miles square, containing 368,640 acres. There are numerous small streams that characterize the county as well watered. All the lands are productive, growing nearly all the crops adapted to the West. Clay Centre is the county seat, located in the exact center of the county. Sutton, Harvard, Fairfield, and Edgar are the principal towns. Saronville, Inland, Glenville, Spring Branch, Ong, and Davis are good points, but less pretentious.

The population of Clay county is down at 18,536; the taxable valuation of property at \$2,871,846.10, and the state levy 7 29-40. Number acres improved land in the county, 242,718; unimproved, 125,922. There are 2,084 farms and 73 manufactories. The year 1886, there were 50,800 acres in wheat; 95,600 in corn; 23,640 in oats; 14,840 in barley. 2,989,782 forest trees planted; 10,860 fruit trees; and 16,820 grape vines planted.

FILLMORE COUNTY

is nearly one hundred miles west from the Missouri river, containing 368,640 acres of land. The main line of the B. & M. R. R. passes across the northern portion of the county. A branch of the same road, running west from DeWitt in Saline county, crosses the southern part, and another branch runs north from Strang to Fairmont. Geneva is the county seat. Other towns of note are Exeter, Eden, Grafton, Shickley, Dudley, Momence, and Turkey Creek. While not, perhaps, as well watered as some other counties, there is no complaint. The West Blue touches the northern border with some excellent water power. Turkey, Indian, School, Sandy, and Walnut creeks are of worth. The valleys are narrow. The general surface is high upland and of even character. Timber was originally scarce. Much atten-

tion, however, has been given tree planting, and future timber outlook and its climatic protection are good.

The population of Fillmore county is 16,356; the taxable valuation of property, \$2,510,845.75; and state levy, 7 29-40. Number acres improved lands, 230,333; unimproved, 242,821. There are 2,135 farms in the county, and 52 manufactories. Of the improved lands last year, 33,363 acres were in wheat; 98,855 in corn; 22,767 in oats; and 7,841 in barley. This county has planted 4,469,674 forest trees; 1,242,110 fruit trees; and 20,355 grape vines.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

borders on Kansas, opposite Phillips county in that state; is one hundred and seventy-five miles west from the Missouri river, and contains 368,640 acres of rich, fertile land. The Republican river passes through this county from west to east, with a number of smaller streams emptying into it, furnishing abundant water supply and most excellent water-power. The main line of the B. & M. R. R. passes through the county from east to west. A branch of the B. & M. R. R. has recently been constructed through the north half of the county. The new towns on this line are Campbell, Upland, and Hildreth. The valley of the Republican river is from four to eight miles wide, the lands of which are as rich almost as possible to make them. The uplands are undulating and exceedingly productive. The water streams are all pure and clear, being fed principally by springs, which are numerous. Bloomington, with a population of about 1,000, is the county seat. The other towns are—Franklin, Riverton, Naponee. The population of the county is 8,067; taxable valuation of property, \$974,217.76; and state levy, 7 29-40. Number of acres of improved land in the county, 109,965; unimproved, 258,775. There are 1,157 farms and 38 manufactories. Last reports show 19,348 acres in wheat; in corn, 2,311; in oats, 4,063; in barley, 1,344; 985,959 forest trees have been planted, 23,493 fruit trees, and 4,308 grape vines.

Prices of lands in this county: Improved range from \$9 to \$13 per acre; unimproved, \$7 to \$9; and cheaper grades from \$4 to \$5. Total taxes on 160 acres improved lands, \$12 to \$20; unimproved, \$9 to \$16. A United States land office is located at Bloomington.

GAGE COUNTY.

This county borders on Kansas, being one of the southern tier, and third from and distant fifty miles from the Missouri river. It is one of the two largest counties in the district embraced in this publication, containing 552,960 acres. The land, it can be safely said, is nearly all of No. 1 quality in all respects, beautifully rolling, undulating, and broken only in a few places; the soil is black alluvium. It is the first county west of the first Guide Meridian east. The water supply and water-power in this county are all that could well be desired. The Big Blue river enters near the northwest corner, flowing diagonally through the county to the southeast corner. It has ten tributaries in the county, principal among which are—Cubb, Bibb's, Cicily, Clanton, Indian, Bear, Cedar, Mud, Plum, and Wild. All these streams are fed largely by ever-flowing springs. These conditions give an unusual variety of land and soils, bottom, bench, and upland. On the border of the Blue, in the southern portion of the county, are found the extensive "Gage County Limestone Quarries," from which the first

state capitol building was erected; also a superior quality of brick clay. The limestone has developed excellent cement quality, an extensive manufacture of which has been engaged in. Forest tree planting has been resorted to largely in Gage county. Not less than 900,000 trees have been planted. Except Lancaster county, Gage is better provided with railroads than any other county in the state. A branch of the Union Pacific, from Lincoln, runs the entire length of the county north and south, through Beatrice to Marysville, Kansas. The A. & N. branch of the B. & M. crosses the northeast corner. Another branch, from Tecumseh to Crete, crosses the central portion, crossing the U. P. at Beatrice. The Cannon Ball Route, from Kansas City, Mo., to Denver, crosses the southern part of the county east and west, a branch of which runs from Odell south into Kansas, and another branch from Wymore to Beatrice. Beatrice, the county seat, is one of the young inland cities of Nebraska, containing 8,000 to 10,000 inhabitants. The other towns are—Wymore, Blue Springs, Liberty, Barnston, Lanham, Odell, Putnam, Filley, Hanover, Mellroy, Freeman, Cropsey, Adams, Meserveville, Silver, Cortland, and Barkey.

The population of Gage is 30,778; the total taxable valuation of property, \$5,124,922.09; and the state levy, 7 39-40. Number of acres improved land, 283,938; unimproved, 215,711. There are 2,934 farms and 158 manufactories in the county. There was in cultivation during the year 1886—20,764 acres in wheat, 131,500 in corn, 20,592 in oats, and 2,396 in barley; 1,534,785 forest trees have been planted in Gage, 163,689 fruit trees, and 48,819 grape vines.

HAMILTON COUNTY.

This county borders on the Platte river, is about one hundred and twenty-five miles west from the Missouri, and contains 311,506 acres of as fine land as can be found in any county, with nearly 2,000 inhabitants. Aurora, as near as may be in the centre, is the county seat. Two lines of the B. & M. R. R. system cross at Aurora, giving outlets to all four points of the compass. The county has an extra water supply. Beside the Platte, four of the principal rivers of the state head in this county. Water power is abundant.

The population of Hamilton county is 13,912; the taxable valuation of property, \$1,835,088.16; and the state levy, 7 39-40. Acres of improved land in the county, 211,747; unimproved, 99,779. There are 2,023 farms and 65 manufactories. The year 1886 showed 36,456 acres in wheat; 56,226 in corn; 13,317 in oats; and 4,979 in barley. Forest trees planted in the county, 2,710,120; fruit trees, 58,924; and grape vines 13,424.

JOHNSON COUNTY

is the second tier both from Kansas line and the Missouri river, twenty miles west from the latter. It contains 241,920 acres of land. The soil is about the same as that in adjacent counties, therein more fully described. The elevation above sea level is about 1,100 feet. The surface of the county and drainage are such that health conditions are as nearly perfect as can be found. The soil is, as all other in the same region, rich and productive, all crops known to western agriculture growing and yielding to the satisfaction of the most fastidious cultivator. This county is one with considerable timber supply originally, and to which has been added liberal forest tree planting of later years. Fine

veins of magnesia lime stone underlie nearly all the county, cropping out in numerous places. Clay for brick making is abundant. Coal has been found to a limited extent in several parts of the county. The county is favored with abundance of water and water power. Every township is said to have running water. The Great Nemaha flows through the entire county, diagonally, from north-west to south-east. The tributaries, most of them important streams, are Watson's Branch, Yankee, Hooke, Deer, Badge, Elk, Coon, Spring, and Saunders Creeks. Transportation facilities are excellent. Two branches of the B. & M. system of railroads—the A. & N. and the old Brownville and Ft. K., cross each other at Tecumseh, traversing the county north, south, east, and west. Tecumseh is the county seat, and contains about 2,000 inhabitants. The other towns are Sterling, Vesta, Elk Creek, Crab Orchard, Smartville, Helena, and Spring Creek.

The population of the county is 12,852; taxable valuation of property \$1,871,276.70; state levy 7 39-40. Number acres improved land, 116,296; unimproved, 116,307. There are 1,335 farms and 59 manufactories in the county. Leading crop acreage in 1886: Wheat, 7,169 acres; corn, 60,845; oats, 9,233. Forest trees planted in the county, 1,624,574; fruit, 50,790, and grape vines, 5,390.

JEFFERSON COUNTY.

This is the fourth county west from the Missouri river, of the southern tier, bordering on Kansas, about seventy-five miles west. It has 368,640 acres of rich, fertile land. Very little of it waste. A portion of that on the south side of Rose creek is hilly and broken, but is fine grain land. The Little Blue river runs diagonally through the county, from the north-west to the south-east, affording almost unlimited water power for the whole year. Most of the small tributaries are fed by springs, which are abundant and of great flow. One spring near Fairbury is of sufficient force to run a small mill near its head. Big and Little Sandy Rock and Rose creeks are considerable streams. Quite a number of mills are located on the larger streams. Lime stone in abundance, from which is burned an excellent quality of lime, is found in various parts of the county. Red sand stone is abundant. Extensive deposits of clay, both for brick and potter's use, exist in Jefferson. There was originally a fair supply of timber, and much has been planted. Fairbury, the county seat, with a population of over 2,000, is located on the St. J. & Gr. Island R. R., which traverses the county nearly diagonally from the south-east to the north-west corner. The Cannon Ball branch of the B. & M. R. R. from Kansas City to Red Cloud, passes through the south part of the county, from east to west, crossing the St. J. & Gr. I. at Endicott. The other towns are Diller, Steele City, Reynolds, Kesterson, Powell, East Meridian, Bower, and Plymouth.

The population of Jefferson county, 14,686; taxable valuation of property, \$2,499,902.56; and the state levy, 7 39-40. Acres improved land, 132,052; unimproved, 212,005. In the county are 1,618 farms and 109 manufactories. The leading crops for 1886 were: Corn, 71,152 acres; wheat, 11,564; oats, 12,506. Forest trees planted in the county, 943,032; fruit trees, 77,310, and grape vines, 22,490.

KEARNEY COUNTY.

This county is in the second tier, and twenty-four miles north of the Nebraska-Kansas line, its northern boundary being the Platte river,

and 175 miles west of the Missouri river. It is one of the 24 mile square counties, containing 576 square miles, or 368,640 acres. The surface of the county is high upland, gently rolling. There are no running streams of water of importance. The water supply, however, is near the surface and easily obtained. Wind mills are abundant, and the water supply all that can be wished for. The soil was thought at first to be shallow, and not as valuable and fertile as wished for. Experience, however, has shown to the contrary. Crops of all kinds grow in abundance and of good quality. This county, at the Nebraska State Fair, 1886, carried off the grand prize for the best county collective exhibit of all kinds of products. Along the border of the Platte river are found some of the almost mythical "sand hills," which scared so many in earlier days. These, true, are not the best for general agricultural purposes, yet afford rich grazing, and will, as other lands have, be transformed into good farming lands in the no distant future.

The population of Kearney county is 9,830; taxable valuation of property, \$2,043,241.16; state levy, 7 29-40. Acres improved lands, 119,690; unimproved, 137,490. There are 1,453 farms and 9 manufacturing in the county. In 1886, 37,852 acres were in wheat; 37,727 in corn; 8,388 in oats; 3,831 in barley. 1,624,574 forest trees have been planted; 50,790 fruit trees; and 5,309 grape vines. The price of improved lands in this county will average \$20 per acre; unimproved, \$16.

LANCASTER COUNTY.

In this county is located Lincoln, the capital of the state. It is near the center of territory between the Nebraska and Kansas state line on the south, the Platte river on the north, the Missouri river on the east, and the sixth principal meridian west. The east line of the county is exactly thirty miles due west from the Missouri river. The area of this county is 552,960 acres, being one of the two largest counties. The surface of the county, while diversified, is chiefly undulating slopes; the land rich and productive. The water supply, while not as extensive as some other counties in the state, is good, with no inconsiderable water power. Salt creek is the principal stream, with others less pretentious, such as Oak, Middle, South, Little Salt, Gar, Rock, and Haines. There is abundance of both magnesian and sandstone. The saline deposits are valuable. The Great Salt Basin is west and near the city of Lincoln. As yet they are not extensively developed, but can, and will be in the future, shown to be an important manufacturing industry. The brine of the natural basin contains thirty per cent pure salt, and the supply inexhaustible. The city of Lincoln is now the great railroad center of the state. The main line of the Burlington and Missouri river R. R. in Nebraska, being an extension of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy road from the Missouri river west to Denver, passes through Lincoln. Other branches of the B. & M. system, one from the Missouri river at Nebraska City, running to a connection with the U. P. R. R. at Central City and Grand Island, passes through Lincoln. Another from Atchison, Kansas, to Columbus on the U. P., also passes through Lincoln. A branch of the Union Pacific R. R. system from Valley, a point on that road, south to Marysville, Kansas, runs through Lincoln. The Missouri Pacific has recently completed a branch line from Weeping Water in Cass county, to Lincoln. The Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley R. R., an

extension west of the Missouri river of the Chicago and Northwestern R.R. system, has completed a branch line from Fremont in Dodge county to Lincoln. Thus there are now radiating from Lincoln eleven lines of operated railroads. The Rock Island and other systems have their eyes on Lincoln, and will be there ere long. Lincoln, the capital, contains now not less than 30,000 population. When it is remembered that twenty years ago all where it now stands was open, bare prairie, the development may be called wonderful.

The other towns in the county are Walton, Emerald, Bennet, Saltillo, Pella, Panama, Holland, Hickman, Olive Branch, Centreville, Denton, Woodlawn, Malcolm, Raymond, Waverly, Crounse, and Roca.

The population of the county of Lancaster is 41,615; taxable valuation of property, \$7,643,128.22; state levy, 7 39-40. There are 277,737 acres improved lands in the county, and 205,888 unimproved. 3,311 farms and 133 manufactories in this county. The crop acreage of 1886 was: wheat, 12,036 acres; corn, 137,908; oats, 24,667. Forest trees planted, 3,355,711; fruit trees, 166,910, and grape vines, 39,180.

NEMAHA COUNTY

is of the second tier of counties north from the Kansas line, and immediately on the Missouri river. It is one of the smaller size counties in area, containing 253,864 acres. There is very little waste land in the county, nearly all being susceptible of cultivation. The heavy-timbered lands on the bluffs joining the Missouri river even have been put under cultivation, principally in fruit. It is one of the counties particularly characterized for growing fine fruit. The first fruit tree planting in the territory was done in Nemaha and Otoe, there being yet a disputed point as to which was first. There are still many hundreds of acres of these fine fruit lands yet unimproved in the bluffs between Brownville, Peru, and Nemaha City, which can be had on most advantageous terms. The soil of the county is all rich and productive. After leaving the timber belt, extending back westward about two miles, the surface of the county is gently rolling and well drained. Some of the finest limestone quarries in the state are in Nemaha county, being extensively worked by the B. & M. R. R. Company. Among the first discoveries of coal in territorial days, was in the bluffs above Brownville. The writer knows of its use as far back as 1855. Some two years ago a shaft was sunk in the corporate limits of Brownville, and good veins of coal found at reasonable depth. A little capital and enterprise, it is thought, would develop this venture into something remunerative. Flattering discoveries were made some years ago near Glen Rock, in the interior of the county. The water supply is excellent. Beside the Missouri river, which, as said, skirts the entire eastern border, the Little Nemaha river, furnishing wide-extended bottom lands, runs diagonally from the northwest corner of the county, emptying into the Missouri river near the southeast corner. Rock Creek and Muddy are quite important streams, with numerous less important, but valuable, tributaries. While much of the water-power is utilized, there is yet much to be improved. Transportation facilities are good, railroads reaching nearly all the towns in the county. The main line of the Missouri Pacific Railroad runs the entire length of the county north and south. A branch of the B. & M. from Nebraska City to Beatrice passes parallel with the Missouri river, nearly the whole length of the county, crossing the M. P. near Auburn, in the center of

the county. Another branch leads off south from Nemaha City to a connection with the A. & N. at Salem, in Richardson county. The K. C. R. R., in Atchison county, Mo., is within two miles of Brownville. The branch of the Missouri Pacific R. R. from Weeping Water, in Cass County, to Nebraska City, courses the northwestern portion of Nemaha from Nebraska City, connecting with the main line at Auburn, the county seat. Auburn is a new, flourishing town in the center of the county, on the M. P. R. R. It has now over 2,000 population. The other towns in the county are—Brownville, Peru, Nemaha City, Hillsdale, Aspinwall, and St. Derooin, on the Missouri river; and Johnson, Brock, Glen Rock, Howe, Febing, Bratton, and Julian, in the interior.

The population of Nemaha county is 16,621; taxable valuation of property, \$2,529,864; state levy, 7 39-40. The number of acres improved land, 194,896; unimproved, 58,968; In the county are 1,599 farms and 97 manufactories. In 1886 there were 9,928 acres in wheat, 63,395 in corn, 7,789 in oats, and 1,341 in barley; forest trees planted, 2,180.021; fruit trees, 160,368; and grape vines, 26,252. The prices of improved land, owing to character of improvements, range from \$20 to \$40 per acre; unimproved, \$10 to \$18; the bluff fruit lands along the Missouri river, from \$5 to \$10.

NUCKOLLS COUNTY

is of the southern tier of counties, bordering on Kansas. It is 140 miles west from the Missouri river, containing 368,640 acres of rich land. The Republican river courses nearly across the south border of the county, as does the main line of the B. & M. R. R. A branch of the same road passes through the county from Superior, south, to Edgar, in Clay county, north. Another branch of same road crosses the northwest corner, and the St. J. & Gr. I. R. R. the northeastern corner of the county. The county is well watered. The Republican flows along the southern border, and the Little Blue crosses the county on the northeast, and well into the interior. Beside, there are Spring and Elk creeks, of importance, and other smaller streams. The land is gently rolling, and productive in the highest degree. It may be said to be one of the best inland timbered counties in the state.

Population of Nuckolls county, 9,726; taxable valuation of property, \$2,097,832.04; state levy, 7 29-40; acres improved land in the county, 105,477; unimproved, 232,083. There are 1,199 farms and 44 manufactories. In the year 1886, 7,716 acres were in wheat, 53,808 in corn, 7,443 in oats, and 2,340 in barley; forest trees planted, 2,614,575; fruit trees, 50,615; and grape vines, 9,364.

OTOE COUNTY

is of the third tier of counties north from the Kansas line north, and fronting its entire width on the Missouri river. It contains 390,000 acres of land, all rich and productive in the highest degree. It is about in the same belt of latitude with Philadelphia, Columbus, and Indianapolis. Save the portion of bluffs on the Missouri river, the county is generally rolling prairie interspersed with water-courses in nearly all parts. This county has, perhaps, more bearing orchards than any other in the state. Nebraska City has been, and is yet, the apple mart for Nebraska apples, having bought and sold in one year over \$200,000 worth. The water supply is good. Beside

the Missouri river, the Little Nemaha River passes through the western portion of the county. There are many other less important but valuable smaller streams. It is said there are but few quarter sections of land in the county without a natural supply of stock water. There was originally a good stand of native timber, especially along the Missouri river. Nearly all the original growth has been cut off, but much more planted. The transportation facilities are excellent. The C. B. & Q. transfers by steam ferry across the Missouri river, and connects with the B. & M. at Nebraska City. Connection is made with the K. C., St. J., & C. B. by regular trains from Nebraska City. The old Midland Pacific, now a part of the B. & M. system, starts out trains daily from Nebraska City south to Beatrice, and west through the entire county to Lincoln and Central City on the U. P. The Missouri Pacific crosses the B. & M. at Dunbar, and is now building a separate line into Nebraska City from the Lincoln junction at Weeping Water. Two extensive pork packing houses are located at Nebraska City, a large distillery and an oil tank distributing depot. Nebraska City is the county seat, having a population of between 5,000 and 8,000. The other towns are: Dunbar, Syracuse, Unadilla, Palmyra, Talmage, Berlin, Delta, Wyoming, and Minersville.

The population of Otoe is 20,879; taxable valuation of property, \$3,966,412.35; state levy, 7 39-40; acres improved land, 317,157; unimproved, 55,798. Crop acreage in 1886: wheat, 15,791 acres; corn, 109,800; oats, 13,717; barley, 9,386. Forest trees planted, 1,568,840; fruit trees, 219,278; grape-vines, 61,411. Prices of land about the same, perhaps a grade higher, than in Nemaha.

PAWNEE COUNTY.

This county is one of the southern tier, bordering on Kansas, the second tier west, and thirty miles distant from the Missouri river. The area is twenty-four miles east and west, and eighteen north and south. It contains 276,480 acres of land. Forty per cent of these lands are under cultivation. Very little waste or broken lands in the county. It is well watered by three principal streams, the north and south fork of the Great Nemaha river, and Turkey creek. Tributary to these streams, and not unimportant, are Mission, Plum, and Wolf creeks. These streams, beside abundant water supply, furnish unlimited water power. The land is all rich and productive, being proportionately divided into bottom and uplands. All the crops known to western agriculture are successfully grown in this county. Corn, wheat, and oats are staple products, returning large yields.

The average yields, one year with another, are shown to be: corn, 45 bushels to the acre; fall or winter wheat, 35; spring wheat, 20; rye, 40; oats, 45; barley, 40. This being one of the older counties, the tame grasses have been successfully introduced. There are now about four thousand acres each timothy and clover, and fifteen hundred acres Kentucky blue grass meadows and pastures. All the improved breeds of horses, cattle, sheep, and hogs have been introduced and successfully raised. In short, all the evidences of advanced civilization and conveniences are here to be enjoyed.

The average price of unimproved lands is about eighteen dollars per acre. Improved lands with comfortable conveniences can be had from twenty-five dollars up. The population of Pawnee county in 1885, the latest census taken, and to which to date may safely be

added a handsome per cent of increase, is given at twelve thousand two hundred and twenty-nine. There are one thousand four hundred and thirty-two improved farms and twenty-seven manufacturing. The total taxable valuation of property returned for 1886 was \$2,205,109.90. This is said to be about one-fifth of the actual value. The state levy is seven and fourteen-fortieth mills.

The A. & N. Branch of the B. & M. R. R. in Nebraska system crosses the north-east corner of this county, well into its interior. From Table Rock, the Cannon Ball branch of the same road, leading to an intersection of the main line at Red Cloud, in Webster county, runs nearly the entire width of the county east and west, thus affording abundant transportation facilities. Pawnee City is the county seat. Other towns are Table Rock, Burchard, Violet, Mission Creek, Cincinnati, Steinman, New Home, Mayberry.

POLK COUNTY.

This county is about ninety miles west from the Missouri River. The Platte River enters its borders near the northeast corner, passing diagonally to the southwest corner. The valley of the river stretches back into the county some twelve or fifteen miles; only a line of low hills separate the low from the uplands. It contains 288,000 acres of land. The soil is a dark rich gray mould, peculiar and productive. In addition to the Platte River, the north fork of the Blue heads in and courses almost the whole length of the county. Osceola, near the centre, is the county seat, with a population of about 1,000, is surrounded by Stromsburg, Swedehome, Thornton, Shelby, Wayland, and Shamps Mills.

Population of county, 11,590; taxable valuation of property, \$1,555,-845.24; state levy, 7 39-40; acres improved land in the county, 167,-060; unimproved, 79,542; staple crop acreage, 1886: wheat, 16,793; corn, 61,282; oats, 19,580; barley, 1,173. Forest trees planted, 2,-818,562; fruit trees, 38,929; grape vines, 5,410.

RICHARDSON COUNTY.

This is the extreme southeastern county in the state, the south line bordering on Kansas, and the east line on the Missouri River. It contains 350,000 acres of land. Bordering on the Missouri River the whole width of the county, and running west ten miles, was a portion of the original famed "half-breed Indian tract" of land, provided for by the old Prairie du Chien Indian treaty, heavily timbered and watered, claimed to be among the most valuable lands in the west. The county is exceedingly well watered, with an abundance of water-power. Both the north and south forks of the Great Nemaha River occupy portions of the county, centering at Salem, and flowing to the outlet into the Missouri River, near the Kansas line. The Big Muddy courses the county extensively, emptying into the Nemaha near its mouth. Other streams of worth are Honey, Rattlesnake, Four-Mile, Rock, and Early Creeks, the Great Nemaha Falls affording magnificent water-power. Among the first coal discoveries in the state were those found in Richardson county. Several shafts have been sunk and worked to some extent. The soil is rich and productive in all parts of the county. The A. & N. branch of the B. & M. system, from Atchison, Kansas, enters the county at the immediate southeast corner, traversing diagonally the entire county to the northwest corner. This is crossed by

the Missouri Pacific at Falls City. A branch of the B. & M. extends from Nemaha City, in Nemaha county, to Salem. Falls City, with a population of about 3,000, is the county seat. Other towns: Salem, Rulo, Dawson, Humboldt, Stella, Verdon, Nohart, Preston, Arago, Barada, Shubert, and Middleburgh.

Population of the county, 22,450; taxable valuation of property \$3,-285,638.06; state levy, 7 39-40; acres improved lands, 272,679; unimproved, 53,053. Crops in 1886: wheat, 12,760 acres; corn, 94,640; oats, 9,645; barley, 1,823. Forest trees planted, 15,862,852; fruit trees, 289,405; grape vines, 6,736. There are 2,307 farms, and 75 manufactories in the county.

SALINE COUNTY.

This is one of the third tier west, and about sixty miles distant from the Missouri River, containing 368,640 acres of land. The topography shows a rather unusual variety, level plains, valleys, and undulating slopes, uplands, bottom and prairie lands. The water supply and water-power are abundant, and of best quality. The Big Blue River crosses the county from north to south; the West Blue joins the main stream in the northwest part. These are fed by numerous streams of considerable size and importance—Turkey, Swan, Walnut, Dry Brush, Spring, Johnson, and Squaw creeks. Already numerous manufactories are utilizing the water-power. The soil is a black loam, varying in depth from three to four feet in the valleys. Is exceedingly fertile and productive. Originally more timber was to be found growing than in most other counties. While much has been cut out, more has been planted. Wilber, with about 2,000 population, is the county seat. The other towns are—Crete, Dorchester, Friend, Pleasant Hill, DeWitt, Swanton, Western, Tobias, Goldrinsey, Varna, Atlanta, Plato, Girard, Saxon. The main line of the B. & M. R. passes across the northern part of the county, east and west. A branch from Crete runs south through the county, to Beatrice, in Gage county. Another branch across the southern portion of the county, east and west, from DeWitt to Holdrege, in Phelps county, and other points northwest.

Doane College, an important educational institution, and the Boswell Observatory, are located at Crete.

Population of the county, 24,209; taxable valuation of property, \$2,-942,495.50; state levy, 7 39-40; acres improved land, 233,525; unimproved, 123,352. Crops of 1886: wheat, 26,293 acres; corn, 116,140; oats, 2,112; barley, 2,945. Forest trees planted, 2,260,318; fruit trees, 131,190; grape vines, 27,043. There are 2,401 farms, and 217 manufactories.

SEWARD COUNTY

occupies a portion of the famous Blue Valley region; is forty miles south of the Platte, sixty miles west from the Missouri Rivers, and contains 368,640 acres of the most rich and productive land in the West. The lay of all the land is beautiful, billowy prairie, winding valleys, timber-fringed streams, and undulating table lands. The mean elevation above tide level is about 1,500 feet. Water supply and water-power abundant. The Big Blue flows the entire length of the county from north to south. The West Blue River, Plum, Middle, Lincoln, and Beaver Creeks are important streams. Numerous smaller streams flow into these. For a prairie county an unusual amount of native timber was originally found growing in Seward

county. Much additional tree planting has been done. The soil is uniformly rich, black mold, furnishing a wide range of products. Two lines of the B. & M. system cross at Seward, which is near the centre of the county, ranging near each of the four points of the compass, and covering near all portions of the county. Other railroad accommodations will be afforded this county in the near future. Seward is the county seat, with about 3,000 population. The other towns are Germantown, Tamora, Utica, Milford, Grover, Ruby, Staplehurst, Orton, Marysville, Camden, and Beaver Crossing.

Population of the county, 18,802; taxable valuation of property, \$2,722,020.30; state levy, 7 39-40; number acres improved land, 318,473; unimproved, 29,589. There are 2,154 farms and 171 manufacturing in the county. The principal crops of 1886 were: Wheat, 19,077 acres; corn, 77,058; oats, 15,319; barley, 1,617. Forest trees planted, 3,859,900; fruit trees, 66,624; grape vines, 20,752.

The prices of improved land range from \$20 to \$45 per acre. Of course very highly improved land ranges higher. Unimproved land will average \$15 per acre.

SAUNDERS COUNTY

borders on the Platte River, which stream courses the entire east and north lines of the county. The east line is twenty-four miles west of the Missouri River. It embraces 483,840 acres of deep, rich, productive soil, and is considered a part of the great Platte Valley. Separating the bottom lands of the Platte are to be found some peculiar and abrupt bluff lands, but these are of no great extent. Here, too, is found the Loess soil to quite an extent, known on the Missouri River border, and characterized for fruit growing. Saunders is regarded as one of the best agricultural regions in the state. The water supply and power is good. Salt Creek, with good water power, touches the extreme south-east corner of the county at Ashland, emptying into the Platte a short distance east. The two forks of Wahoo, Oak, and Rock Creeks afford good inland supplies of water and power. The Stromsburg branch of the U. P. R. R. and F. E. & M. V. from Fremont to Lincoln cross each other at Wahoo almost at right angles with the points of compass, coursing the country north and south and east and west. The main line of the B. & M. R. R. crosses the extreme south-eastern corner of the county at Ashland. Wahoo, the county seat, has a population of between 2,000 and 2,500. The other towns are: Ashland, Weston, Valparaiso, Ceresco, Veda, Milton, Ithaca, Swedeburg, Newton, Plasi, Rescue, Cedar Hill, Cedar Bluffs, Colon, Mead, Edenburg, and Isla.

Population of the county, 14,671; taxable valuation of property, \$2,623,150.32; state levy, 7 39-40. Acres of improved land, 392,155; unimproved, 61,293. Crops, 1886: 20,612 in wheat; corn, 120,101; oats, 29,410. In the county there are 3,035 farms and 120 manufacturing. Forest trees planted, 550,200; fruit trees, 115,104; grape vines, 19,206.

THAYER COUNTY.

This county is the first of the southern tier west of the sixth principal meridian. Its citizens claim it as the exact geographical centre of the United States. It is about one hundred miles from the Missouri River, and contains, as do other twenty-four-mile-square counties, 368,640 acres of rich land. The St. J. & Gr. I. runs across the county from east to west. The B. & M. touches the southern

boundary at Chester, from which point a branch running to Hebron, the county seat, crosses the St. J. & G. I. R. R. at Belvidere. The northeastern portion of the county is somewhat broken. The county is thoroughly watered. The Little Blue crosses the centre of the county. Beside, are Big Sandy, Spring, Dry and Rose creeks, with a net-work of tributaries. Nearly all these streams furnish valuable water-power. On Little Blue and Rose creeks are found inexhaustible supplies of magnesian limestone. Considerable timber is found along the borders of streams named.

Population of the county, 12,650; taxable valuation of property, \$2,406,002.10; state levy, 7 29-40. Acres improved land, 109,845; unimproved, 233,216. The crop acreage for 1886 was: 10,708 in wheat; 58,696 in corn; oats, 9,268; barley, 1,442. There are 1,296 farms and 60 manufactories in the county. Forest trees planted, 358,651; fruit trees, 27,189; grape vines, 4,405.

WEBSTER COUNTY.

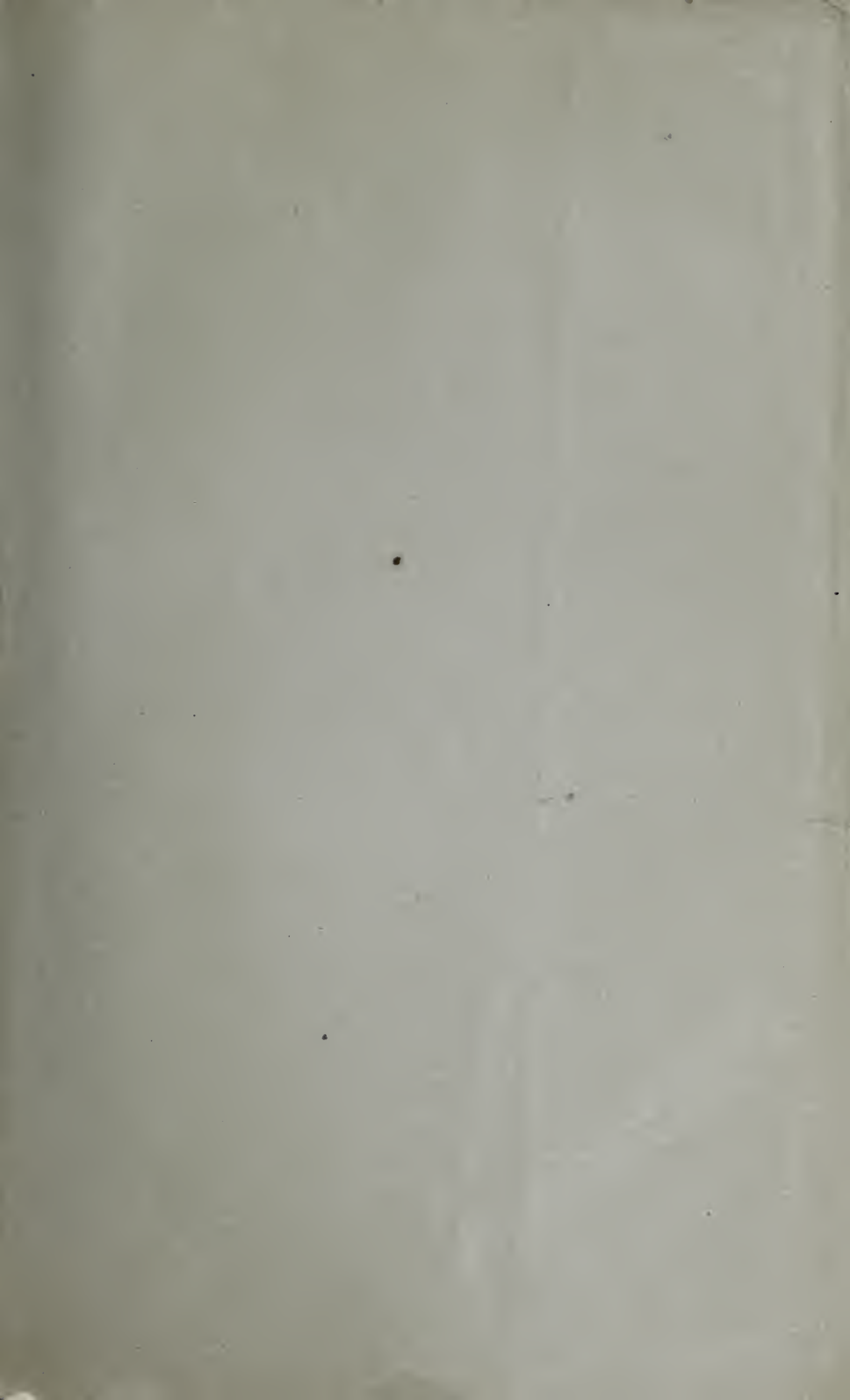
This is one of the southern border counties adjoining Kansas. It is one hundred and fifty miles west from the Missouri river. The Republican river flows across it from west to east. Red Cloud, the county seat, has about 3,000 population, and is on the southern line of the B. & M. R. R. at the junctions from Kansas City, Mo. and Hastings, Neb. The B. & M. R. R. passes through its entire length from east to west, and also a branch from north to south. Besides the Republican river, the county is well watered by numerous smaller streams and an abundance of excellent springs. Rich bottom lands prevail, from which the uplands are reached by gentle slopes. The lands, 368,640 acres, are all first quality; skirting the Republican river, particularly, are found valuable tracts of native indigenous timber. Besides a large acreage of timber has been planted.

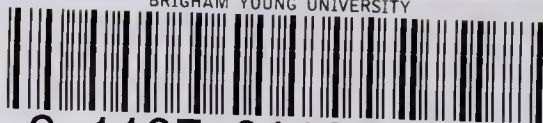
Population of county, 13,226; taxable valuation of property, \$2,524,362.34; state levy, 7 14-40. Number of acres improved land, 124,761; unimproved, 180,317. Crops for 1886: wheat, 10,422 acres; corn, 34,417; oats, 6,092; barley, 1,909. Farms, 1,373, and manufactories, 27. Forest trees planted, 1,047,676; fruit trees, 30,837; grape vines, 4,350.

YORK COUNTY

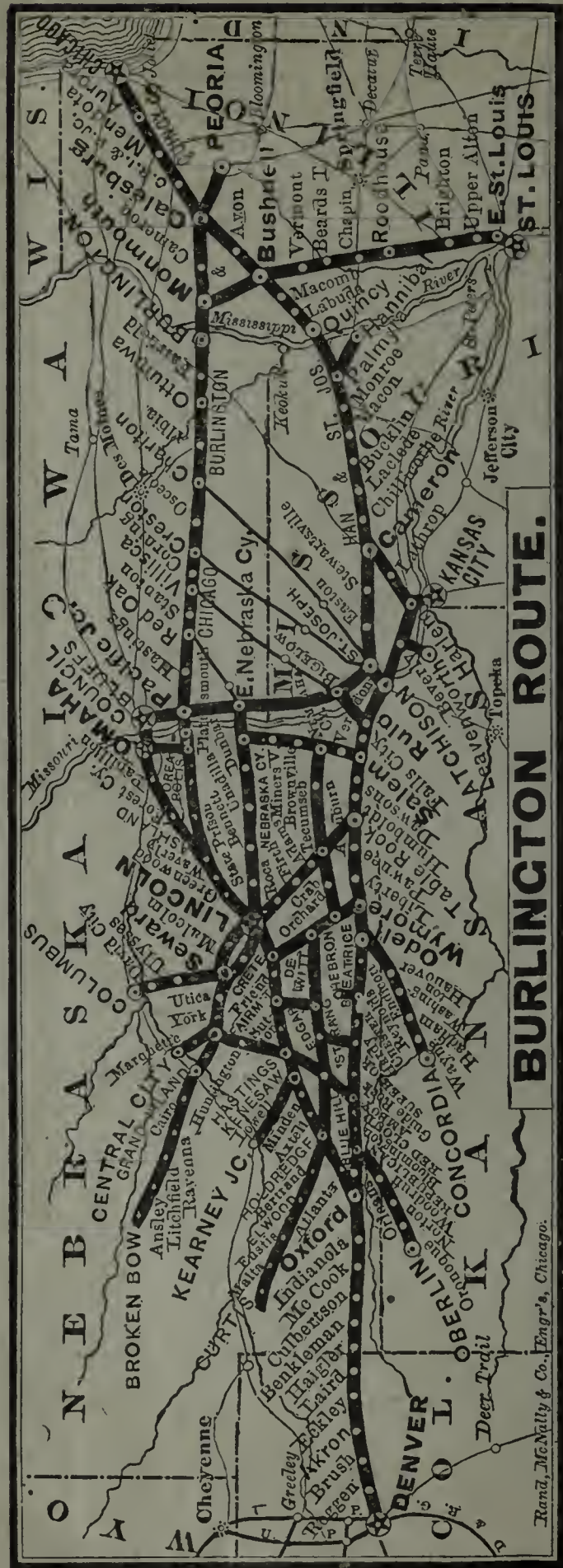
is less than one hundred miles from the Missouri river. A branch of the B. & M. R. R. leading from Lincoln to Grand Island, and thence northwest to Ravenna, in Buffalo county, passes about midway north and south, across the entire county from east to west. The general surface of the county is level. The West Bule river passes through the southern edge, and the Blue river through the northern portion, both of which furnish the best of water power, and on which are located some excellent flour mills. Beaver and Lincoln creeks are considerable streams. The soil is uniformly first-class. The town of York is the county seat, and has a population of over 2,500. The other towns are Bradshaw, Arborville, Cresswell, Thayer, Pleasant Home, Dana, McFadden, Blue Valley, Redlion, Waco, Eureka, Palo, and Indian Creek.

Population of the county, 16,640; taxable valuation of property, \$2,688,530.89; state levy, 7 39-40. Acres improved land, 246,150; unimproved, 96,415. Farms, 2,495, with 87 manufactories. The crops of 1886 were: wheat, 36,166 acres; corn, 102,099; oats, 20,958; barley, 3,847. Forest trees planted in the county, 1,845,234; fruit trees, 92,722; grape vines, 26,939.





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MAP OF
NEBRASKA
AND
EASTERN COLORADO.
Published by the
BURLINGTON ROUTE.
1887
Scale 12 Miles to 1 Inch
Compiled from the Official
Records of the Government
and Land Office.
F. H. Schuchert, C. E.

REFERENCES.
Surveyor General's Office
Land Office
COUNTY SEATS
TOWNS & CITIES.
Boundary of Land Reserved
Military Reservation
Indian Reservation
Rail Roads.

REFERENCES.
Dakota Land District
Omaha Grand 1st
Western South Platte
Nebraska
Republican Valley
Hatchcock Land District
Nebraska

